

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Roland Schindler on May 5, 2011.

The application has been amended as follows:

18. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented method of managing an inventory for serviceable equipment requiring routine maintenance for a plurality of items comprising the steps of:

providing an inventory of replacement parts for said items;

associating each of said items using a processor with a parameter that provides an estimate of servicing needs for said item;

tracking said parameters using a processor to identify replenishment needs for said inventory;

generating an order form for replacement parts of said items for said inventory based on estimated needs using a processor; and

providing a dormancy feature for at least one of said plurality of items, the dormancy feature being activated so that an associated parameter for one or more of

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the plurality of items is placed in a dormant state so that such associated parameters do not become a trigger point for the tracking device to generate an order for said one or more items.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Claim 1 and 18 discusses an inventory management system and method which includes a computational element operatively coupled to at least one piece of equipment and to each parameter.

Computational element includes a dormancy feature for at least one of said plurality of items, said dormancy feature being activated so that an associated parameter for one or more of the plurality of items is placed in a dormant state so that such associated parameters do not become a trigger point for the tracking device to generate an order for said one or more items.

The most remarkable prior arts on record are to Smith (PG PUB. 2003/0172072) and Inami et al. (PG PUB. 2003/0040984). Smith is directed to a method and system for automatically ordering replacement of consumable parts of a system. Smith, *Abstract*. Inami et al. is directed to an image processing apparatus that includes an order placement means for executing an operation associated with order placement of an expendable used in an image forming apparatus. Inami et al., *Abstract*.

Smith nor Inami et al. teach the structural limitations of the claimed invention, where a computational element includes a dormancy feature for at least one of said plurality of items, said dormancy feature being activated so that an associated parameter for one or more of the plurality of items is placed in a dormant state so that

such associated parameters do not become a trigger point for the tracking device to generate an order for said one or more items.

Moreover, none of the prior art of record remedies the deficiencies found in Smith and Inami et al. or could be combined with any other reference to produce the claimed invention.

Drawings

The drawings were received on August 22, 2003. These drawings are sufficient.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Haines, U.S. Patent #6,295,423, September 25, 2001 discloses an inventory management system with a built-in life monitoring mechanism that orders parts based on life remaining with the consumable.

Harper, Patent Granted Publication 2002/0143642, October 3, 2002 discusses a process for setting and storing ordering preferences and profile data locally.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ASHFORD HAYLES whose telephone number is (571)270-5106. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 8:00 A.M.- 5:00 P.M..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Matthew S. Gart can be reached on 571-272-3955. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/A. H./
Examiner, Art Unit 3687

/Matthew S Gart/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3687